



## Conceptual Distinctions in Hadith Studies: Understanding the Differences Between Hadith, Sunnah, Khabar, and Atsar

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### Article History:

Received: 8/12/2025

Revised: 10/12/2025

Accepted: 10/12/2025

### Keywords:

Hadith

Conceptual Distinction

Islamic Scholarship

**Abstract:** *This study examines the conceptual distinctions between the key terms "Hadith," "Sunnah," "Khabar," and "Atsar" within the science of Hadith. While often used interchangeably in Islamic scholarship, these terms carry nuanced differences that have significant methodological implications for hadith research, verification, and transmission. Employing a qualitative approach through library research and descriptive-analytical methods, this study analyzes authoritative classical and contemporary texts to map the definitions, scopes, and scholarly debates surrounding each term. The findings reveal that "Hadith" is the most specific term, strictly referring to narrations attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). "Sunnah" has a broader scope, encompassing the Prophet's continuous practice, character, and life journey, and is heavily emphasized in legal theory (Usul al-Fiqh). "Khabar" is a more general term for "news," which, according to various scholarly opinions, can be synonymous with Hadith, refer specifically to non-prophetic reports, or encompass both. "Atsar" predominantly refers to narrations from the Companions and Successors, though it is sometimes used synonymously with Hadith. The research concludes that the semantic complexity and diverse scholarly perspectives on these terms are not merely academic but fundamentally impact the methodology of hadith studies and Islamic legal derivation. A precise understanding of these distinctions is therefore crucial for the integrity and depth of contemporary Islamic research.*

## INTRODUCTION

Studying the science of Hadith is a highly valuable opportunity to understand the extent to which a hadith is truly authentic and originates from the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). As the second source of Islamic teachings after the Qur'an, the history of Hadith is inseparable from the history of Islam itself (Aisyah, 2020). However, in some aspects, there are specific characteristics, so studying it requires a special approach, one of which is by understanding the conceptual distinctions between key terminologies in this discipline. Within Islamic scholarship, the term "Hadith," generically understood as everything originating from or based on the Prophet Muhammad (SAW, whether his sayings, actions, or tacit approvals, is often used interchangeably with the terms Sunnah, Khabar, and Atsar (Ajjā, 1989). This confusion is not merely semantic

but has methodological implications in hadith research and transmission. Some scholars use these terms synonymously, while others provide specific definitions that differentiate the scope and source of each terminology (Azhary, Hakim, et al., 2025).

The complexity of understanding hadith authenticity began in the early Islamic period. During the Prophet's time, hadith was received relying on the memorization of what the companions heard and saw, and only a portion of hadith was written down. This was due to the policy of the Messenger of Allah (SAW) who once prohibited the writing of hadith, as narrated in Sahih Muslim:

لَا تَكْتُبُوا عَنِّي، وَمَنْ كَتَبَ عَنِّي غَيْرَ الْقُرْآنِ فَلْيَمْحُهِ

"Do not write anything from me. Whoever writes from me other than the Qur'an, let him erase it." (HR. Muslim)

This prohibition was motivated by the concern of mixing hadith with the Qur'an during the early period of revelation. However, this policy was not absolute, as evidenced by narrations showing the Prophet's permission to write hadith, such as the narration by Abu Dawud from Abdullah bin 'Amr:

فَقَالَ : اَكْتُبْ فَوَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ مَا خَرَجَ مِنْهُ إِلَّا حَقٌّ

The Messenger of Allah said: 'Write. By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, nothing comes out from it (my mouth) except truth'." (HR. Abu Dawud)

Similarly, the narration in Al-Bukhari regarding Abu Syah's request during the Conquest of Makkah:

اَكْتُبُوا لِأَبِي شَاهٍ

"Write (this speech) for Abu Syah." (HR. Al-Bukhari)

This dual transmission pattern—between prohibition and permission to write—indicates a dynamic development in the methodology of hadith preservation. The prohibition to write was applied when the transmission of the Qur'an was still intensive to prevent the mixing of materials, while permission was given after those concerns could be addressed. Thus, the Prophet's hadith that developed during his time relied more on oral transmission than written documentation (Azhary, Mashur, et al., 2025).

It is within this context that understanding the conceptual distinctions between Hadith, Sunnah, Khabar, and Atsar becomes important. Hadith is generally limited to what is attributed

to the Prophet, while Sunnah, in the understanding of some scholars, encompasses continuous practice that goes beyond textual narration. Khabar has a broader scope as it can include reports from others besides the Prophet, whereas Atsar more specifically refers to the sayings or actions of the companions (Noorhidayati, 2017).

Based on the above explanation, this research formulates three key questions: (1) What are the conceptual definitions of Hadith, Sunnah, Khabar, and Atsar according to scholars? (2) Where are the similarities and terminological differences between these four terms? (3) How diverse are the views of scholars in defining and distinguishing their scope? The objectives of this research are to explain the definitions and scope of each term, analyze the points of convergence and divergence that characterize them, and map the differences in scholars' views regarding the distinctions between Hadith, Sunnah, Khabar, and Atsar.

Several previous studies have examined similar topics, but there remain academic gaps to be filled. For example, Khamisna Maulidia in her work entitled "Pengertian, Persamaan dan perbedaan Hadits, Sunnah, Khabar dan Atsar (Maulidia, 2023)," conducted a fundamental exploration by mapping the definitions of each term and comparing their similarities and differences. This research successfully provides a clear general picture for beginners wanting to understand the conceptual boundaries between terms. However, this study is more descriptive and has not delved deeper into the roots of differing opinions among scholars or the methodological implications of these distinctions for contemporary Islamic studies.

Another study was conducted by Kaharuddin and Abdussahid in the article "HADIS SEBAGAI SUMBER HUKUM ISLAM: (Tinjauan Paham Inkar As-Sunnah, Syi'ah, dan Orientalis) (Kaharuddin and Abdussahid, 2018)". The focus of this research broadens by analyzing the position of hadith as a source of Islamic law and how the understanding of it is responded to by groups such as Inkar As-Sunnah, Shi'a, and orientalists. Thus, this research provides a broader and more contextual perspective on the significance of hadith authenticity and authority. However, due to its wide scope, detailed discussion on the conceptual distinctions between Hadith, Sunnah, Khabar, and Atsar is not the main focus, creating a gap for a more specific and in-depth study of the terminology itself.

Furthermore, Hani Sholihah in her writing "TERM-TERM PENTING TERKAIT HADITS DALAM KAJIAN HUKUM ISLAM" attempts to connect hadith terminology with the discipline of Islamic law (Sholihah, 2023). This research has added value because it not only defines terms but also seeks to demonstrate their relevance in the context of legal derivation (istinbath al-ahkam). Nevertheless, its approach is still limited to the legal domain, so the analysis of these conceptual distinctions has not been fully viewed from the perspective of pure hadith science, transmission

history, and its semantic development over time. It is this limitation that leaves room for research that specifically and comprehensively examines the definitional debates and their methodological implications in hadith verification.

Thus, the three previous studies have provided a good foundation. However, there remains a gap, namely the absence of a study that specifically, deeply, and comparatively analyzes the differences in views among scholars—both classical and contemporary—in defining Hadith, Sunnah, Khabar, and Atsar, and highlights the practical implications of these definitional differences on hadith research methodology.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach with a library research method, focusing on the analysis of authoritative texts in the science of Hadith (Lexy, 2017). The type of research applied is a conceptual study with a descriptive-analytical approach to reveal the terminological distinctions between Hadith, Sunnah, Khabar, and Atsar.

The research data sources include primary books of hadith science such as *Al-Kifayah fi 'Ilm al-Riwayah* by Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, *Tadrib al-Rawi* by Al-Suyuti, *Muqaddimah Ibn al-Salah*, and *Fath al-Mughith* by Al-Sakhawi, as well as relevant contemporary works. Data analysis techniques use a comparative-analytical method with stages of identifying definitions, classifying scholarly views, analyzing methodological implications, and verifying the consistency of terminology usage (Muhadjir, 2000).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Definition of Hadith, Sunnah, Khabar, and Atsar

#### A. Meaning of Hadith

The meaning of Hadith encompasses several definitions, including **الْجَدِيد** (something new), **الْقَرِيب** (something close/recent), and **الْخَبَر** (news or report). The meaning of *al-jadid* is something new or modern. It is also important to note that in the context of hadith science, the intended meaning of the word *hadith* is everything that comes from the Messenger of Allah, while the *Qur'an* comes from Allah. The word **الْقَرِيب** means something close or that occurred not long ago, as found in the phrase "*hadith al-ahad bi al-islam*" which is commonly used for a person who has recently embraced Islam. The word **الْخَبَر** is interpreted as news or a statement from someone conveyed to another. The use of this word has long been known in pre-Islamic (Jahiliyah) society, and it continued after the advent of Islam (Ramli, 2005).

Regarding the meaning of **الْخَبَر**, according to Ath-Thibi and Muhammad Mahfuzh, they stated that 'Hadith' is not limited to *khabar marfu'* (attributed to the Prophet) but also

includes khabar mauquf (attributed to a Companion) and khabar maqtu' (attributed to a Successor). This is also acknowledged by 'Ajjaj al-Khatib: "When the term Hadith is mentioned, what is meant by it is something attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) whether it is a saying, action, tacit approval, physical or moral characteristic, and sometimes it is also meant to refer to something attributed to a Companion or a Successor (Ramli, 2005)."

In daily usage, the term hadith is often used to refer to anything attributed to the Prophet or anything originating from the Prophet, which is also frequently termed Sunnah. In several sources discussing hadith studies, whether related to history, figures, scholarship, or hadith itself, the term Hadith is often used only at the beginning of the discussion, but thereafter the author uses other terms such as Sunnah and Khabar, as done by Abu Zahwu in his book *Al-Hadith wa al-Muhaddithun*. In his book, the word hadith is used as the title, but throughout the discussion, Abu Zahwu uses the term Sunnah to refer to what is attributed to the Prophet. This is perhaps the main background for why discussing these definitions becomes a mandatory discussion in hadith study literature.

ما أضيف إلى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قولاً أو فعلاً أو صفات أو وسمي بذلك مقابلة للقرآن فإنه

قديم

"Everything attributed to the Prophet, whether a saying, action, characteristic, or tacit approval. This naming is in contrast to the Qur'an, for the Qur'an is eternal (*Qadim*) (Lukman, 2024)."

Epistemologically, hadith is viewed by the majority of Muslims as the second source of Islamic teachings after the Qur'an. This is because it serves as the *bayan* (clarification) for Qur'anic verses that are still general. Even independently, hadith can function to establish a ruling not established by the Qur'an. Furthermore, according to Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, As-Sunnah is the practical interpretation of the Qur'an, its realistic implementation, and also the ideal implementation of Islam. The personality of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) himself is the interpretation of the Qur'an and the embodiment of Islam (Qardhawi, 1994).

The book *Taisir Musthalah al-Hadith* explains briefly that it is everything attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), whether a saying, action, tacit approval (*taqrir*), or characteristic. What is meant by tacit approval (*taqrir*) is any action performed by a Companion during the Prophet's time that did not receive any reprimand from him.

## B. Meaning of Sunnah

Sunnah linguistically contains several meanings, including meaning an action and a path, whether good or bad. According to Ibn Manzur: "In hadith, the word Sunnah has been mentioned

repeatedly and terms related to it. Its original meaning is 'path' and 'way.' When associated with Shari'ah law, it refers to what the Prophet commanded, what he prohibited, and what he recommended, whether in word or deed, which is not explicitly stated in the Qur'an. Therefore, in Shari'ah evidence, the phrase '*al-kitab wa al-sunnah*' (the Book and the Sunnah) is used, referring to the Qur'an and Hadith." According to Imam Al-Shatibi: "The term *as-sunnah* is also established as an antonym for *bid'ah* (innovation). So, it is said: 'A person follows the *sunnah*' if he does something known from the Prophet, and it is said '*bid'ah*' if he does something contrary to that." Imam Al-Shatibi also opined: "The term *as-sunnah* is also applied to what the Companions did, whether found in the Qur'an or not, because the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said:

“عليكم بسنتي وسنة الخلفاء الراشدين المهديين”.

('Hold fast to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly Guided Caliphs.')

However, with the development of Islamic sciences, the term *Sunnah* has various understandings and meanings depending on the scholarly perspective taken, among them:

1. According to *Muhaddithin* (Hadith Scholars): "Everything that comes from the Prophet, whether a saying, action, tacit approval (*taqrir*), or characteristic."
2. According to *Usuliyyin* (Legal Theorists): "Everything originating from the Prophet (SAW), whether a saying, action, or tacit approval, that can be used as evidence for Shari'ah rulings."
3. According to *Fuqaha'* (Jurists): "Something for which there is reward if performed and blame/reproof (but not punishment) if omitted," or: "A command that is not obligatory."

The book *Taisir Musthalah al-Hadith* explains that Sunnah has two meanings: It is the same as or synonymous with Hadith. And, Sunnah has a broader scope than Hadith, because it is not limited to what comes from the Prophet alone, but also includes what comes from the Companions or the Successors (Muhammad, 2001).

### C. Meaning of Khabar

The word *Khabar* (خبر in Arabic) linguistically means *annaba* (news), its plural is *Akhbar* (أخبار). Terminologically, Khabar has various definitions: Khabar is synonymous with the meaning of Hadith (meaning the two are one term). Khabar differs in meaning from Hadith: Hadith refers to what comes from the Prophet (SAW), while Khabar refers to what comes from other than the Prophet Muhammad. Terminologically, Khabar has various definitions:

1. Khabar is synonymous with the meaning of Hadith (meaning the two are one term).
2. Khabar differs from Hadith: Hadith is what comes from the Prophet (SAW), while Khabar is what comes from other than the Prophet (SAW).



3. Khabar has a general meaning: Hadith is what comes from the Prophet (SAW), while Khabar is what comes from the Prophet and others (Thahan, 2018).

Khabar linguistically means news or information. In the science of Hadith, *khabar* refers to everything that is narrated, whether it originates from the Prophet (SAW), the Companions, or later generations. Regarding Khabar, the book *Ikhtisar 'Ilm al-Hadith* presents three views: First: It is the same as or synonymous with Hadith. Second: It differs from Hadith: Hadith is what comes from the Messenger of Allah (SAW), while Khabar is what comes from other than the Messenger. Third: It is more general than Hadith: Hadith is what comes from the Prophet (SAW), while Khabar is what comes from the Prophet and others.

#### D. Meaning of Atsar

Linguistically, *Atsar* (أثر in Arabic) means the trace or remnant of something. Terminologically, *Atsar* has several meanings: First, it is synonymous with Hadith, meaning their terminological meanings are the same. Second: Abu Al-Qasim Al-Furoni said: "The jurists are of the view that *khabar* is everything narrated from the Prophet, while *atsar* is something narrated from the Companions (Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, 1998)." Third: What is attributed to the Lawgiver (the Prophet) is called *Khabar*. What is attributed to a Companion is called *Atsar*, and what is attributed to scholars is called *Qawl* (statement) and *Madhhab* (school of thought) (al-Sakhawi, 1996). Besides the above definitions, it is also mentioned that an *atsar* can be equated with a *hadith* if it can be confirmed that it indeed originates from the Prophet, as in a narration stating, "This *atsar* is from the Prophet."

*Atsar* is typically used to refer to the sayings or actions of Companions and Successors. However, in some usage, *atsar* can refer to a hadith. In the book *Ikhtisar 'Ilm al-Hadith*, *Atsar* has two meanings: First: It is the same as or synonymous with Hadith. Second: It is something attributed to a Companion of the Prophet or a Successor, whether a saying or an action.

#### Similarities and Differences Between Hadith, Sunnah, Khabar, and Atsar

##### A. Hadith and Sunnah

Hadith encompasses the sayings, actions, and approvals of the Prophet (SAW) that form the basis of Islamic law. Meanwhile, Sunnah has a broader scope, encompassing all things originating from the Prophet (SAW)—including his sayings, actions, approvals, as well as his personal traits, character, and life journey, both before and after prophethood.

##### B. Hadith and Khabar

Some Hadith scholars differentiate between the two: *Khabar* is used for reports originating from other than the Prophet (SAW), while *Hadith* is specifically for narrations sourced from the Prophet (SAW). However, other scholars hold the view that *Khabar* is broader

than *Hadith*, because *Khabar* encompasses every narrated report, whether from the Prophet or others, while *Hadith* is limited to narrations from the Prophet alone. There is also an opinion stating that the terms *Khabar* and *Hadith* are used only for narrations originating from the Prophet (SAW), while narrations from Companions are called *Atsar*.

### C. Hadith and Atsar

The majority of scholars equate the term *Atsar* with *Khabar* and *Hadith*. However, some scholars view *Atsar* as synonymous with *Khabar*, i.e., everything attributed to the Prophet (SAW), Companions, or Successors. Al-Zarkashi, for instance, uses the term *Atsar* primarily for *hadith mauquf* (narration from a Companion) but also permits its use for *hadith marfu'* (narration from the Prophet). Thus, Hadith refers only to narrations from the Prophet (SAW), while Atsar encompasses narrations from the Prophet, Companions, and Successors.<sup>1</sup>

**Table of Similarities and Differences Between Hadith, Sunnah, Khabar, and Atsar**

Term	General Similarity According to Majority of Scholars	Key Difference According to Scholars	Primary Attribution	Important Note
<b>Hadith</b>	Can mean the same as Sunnah, Khabar, and Atsar in general usage.	Hadith encompasses the sayings, actions, and approvals of the Prophet (SAW).	Prophet Muhammad (SAW) ( <i>marfu'</i> ).	The most specific term for Prophetic narrations.
<b>Sunnah</b>	Can be used synonymously with Hadith, Khabar, or Atsar.	Broader scope: besides sayings and actions, includes habits, character, and life journey of the	Prophet Muhammad (SAW).	In <i>Usul al-Fiqh</i> , Sunnah relates to Shari'ah rulings.

<sup>1</sup> Abu al- Fadhl Ahmad bin Ali al-Asqolaniy, *Nazhatu al-Nadzh Fi Taudihi Nukhbah al Fikr*, ( Safir: Riyadh,1), Juz1, Hal. 35.



Term	General Similarity According to Majority of Scholars	Key Difference According to Scholars	Primary Attribution	Important Note
		Prophet, before and after prophethood.		
<b>Khabar</b>	Often interchangeable with Hadith and Atsar.	According to some scholars: news from other than the Prophet. According to others: more general than Hadith as it includes the Prophet and others.	Prophet (SAW), Companions, or others (depending on scholarly opinion).	Some scholars equate it with Hadith.
<b>Atsar</b>	Sometimes used as a synonym for Hadith and Khabar.	According to some scholars: <i>Atsar</i> is narrations from Companions and Successors. Majority: can also include Prophetic narrations.	Companions and Successors (according to the differentiating view).	Al-Zarkashi uses it for <i>hadith mauquf</i> but permits use for <i>marfu'</i> .

Table of Terms in Example Usage

Type of Narration	Hadith	Sunnah	Khabar	Atsar
Narration from the Prophet (SAW)	✓	✓	✓ (according to some scholars)	✓ (according to some scholars)
Narration from a Companion	✗	✗	✓	✓
Narration from a Successor	✗	✗	✓	✓
Used as a general term	✓	✓	✓	✓

From the table above, it can be explained that the four terms—Hadith, Sunnah, Khabar, and Atsar—essentially have very close overlapping meanings according to the majority of scholars. All four are used to refer to forms of narration related to Islamic teachings. However, each term has a distinct emphasis in meaning according to its usage by scholars in the disciplines of Hadith and Usul al-Fiqh.

Hadith is the most specific term as it directly refers to all sayings, actions, approvals, or characteristics of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). This term is widely used in the discipline of Hadith science, especially when discussing aspects of sanad (chain of transmission) and matn (text).

Sunnah has a broader scope than Hadith. Besides the Prophet's sayings and actions, Sunnah also includes his habits, life journey, and characteristics. In Usul al-Fiqh, the term Sunnah is more often used as a source of Shari'ah law (Shodiq, Royyan, et al., 2025).

In contrast, Khabar, in the view of some scholars, means news in general, whether originating from the Prophet or others. Thus, Khabar has a wider scope than Hadith. However, other scholars use the term Khabar as a synonym for Hadith.

Meanwhile, Atsar is more commonly used to refer to narrations from Companions and Successors. Nevertheless, some scholars still use it for Prophetic narrations, so Atsar is sometimes interchanged with the term Hadith.

Thus, from the table, it appears that the similarity of these four terms lies in their nature as narrations within the Islamic scholarly tradition, while their differences lie in the subject of

narration and the scope of meaning emphasized by each term. This explanation helps understand the reason why some texts use different terms but actually refer to similar objects in the study of Hadith science (Nirwana, 2012).

## Scholarly Perspectives on Hadith, Sunnah, Khabar, and Atsar

### A. Scholarly Perspectives on Hadith

#### 1. According to Drs. Abubakar Muhammad

According to the definition of the majority of scholars cited by Drs. Abubakar Muhammad in *Ikhtisar Musthalahul Hadis*, Hadith is "anything attributed to the Prophet (SAW) in the form of his sayings, actions, or his tacit approvals, and so on (Rahman, 1970)."

Based on this definition, Hadith includes three main elements:

- a) The sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) (his speech).
- b) The actions of the Prophet (SAW) witnessed by the Companions.
- c) The actions of Companions known to the Prophet (SAW) but not reprimanded by him, as a sign of approval.

From these three elements, it can be understood that Hadith encompasses all the Prophet's behavior—whether verbal, practical, or his approval of the Companions' actions. Therefore, Hadith plays a very important role as a guide for life for Muslims worldwide.

#### 2. According to Drs. H. Abdul Aziz

Linguistically, the word *hadith* means something new, close, or news/report. Terminologically, Drs. Abdul Aziz explains that Hadith is all the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), including all his behavior exemplified for his community (Aziz, 1988). Thus, Hadith holds a very important position as a guide for morality and a reference in daily life.

#### 3. According to Drs. M. Agus Solahudin M.

Citing Ibn Manzur, M. Agus Solahudin explains that the word *hadith* (Arabic: al-ḥadīth) has the plural forms al-aḥādīth, al-ḥadathān, or al-ḥudtsān. Etymologically, this word has several meanings, including al-jadīd (the new, opposite of al-qadīm), and al-khabar meaning news or report (Ibn Manzhur, 1992).

Furthermore, M. M. Azami defines *hadith* (al-ḥadīth) etymologically as "communication, story, or conversation"—whether religious or secular, historical or contemporary. This interpretation shows the breadth of the meaning of *hadith* from a linguistic perspective (Azami, 2003).

## B. Scholarly Perspectives on Sunnah

Linguistically, *Sunnah* means habit or way, whether good or bad. Its meaning can also be "the trodden path," whether praiseworthy or blameworthy, and can also mean consistent guidance.

Terminologically, scholars differ in defining *Sunnah* due to differences in their disciplinary backgrounds. There are three main groups:

1. Hadith Scholars (*Muhaddithin*): *Sunnah* is everything originating from the Prophet (SAW), whether his sayings, actions, tacit approvals (*taqrir*), traits, character, or his life journey—both before and after his prophethood.
2. Legal Theorists (*Usuliyyin*): *Sunnah* is everything attributed to the Prophet (SAW) that relates to Shari'ah rulings, whether his sayings, actions, or approvals.
3. Jurists (*Fuqaha'*): *Sunnah* is any ruling from the Prophet (SAW) other than what is obligatory (*wajib*) or prescribed (*fardh*). *Sunnah* here is one of the five *taklifi* rulings (*ahkam taklifiyyah*: obligatory, recommended, forbidden, reprehensible, permissible). Anything not included in these five rulings is understood as *bid'ah* (innovation) (al-Khatib, 1989).

## C. Scholarly Perspectives on Khabar

Linguistically, *Khabar* means news conveyed by one person to another. According to Hadith scholars (*muhaddithin*), *Khabar* is news originating from the Prophet, Companions, or Successors. Thus, *hadith marfu'* (attributed to Prophet), *mauquf* (attributed to Companion), and *maqtu'* (attributed to Successor) are all included in the category of *Khabar*. Therefore, some scholars state that the term *Khabar* is synonymous with *Hadith*.

However, there are differing opinions regarding the terminological definition of *Khabar*:

1. *Khabar* is synonymous with *Hadith*.
2. *Khabar* is news from other than the Prophet, while *Hadith* is specifically for news sourced from the Prophet (SAW). This view differentiates the roles of *muhaddith* (transmitter of Prophetic hadith) and *akhbari* (transmitter of history or information other than hadith) (Azhar, Ligi, et al., 2025).
3. *Khabar* is more general than *Hadith*. This means every *Hadith* is a *Khabar*, but not every *Khabar* is a *Hadith* (Badrus and Nabel, 2020).

## D. Scholarly Perspectives on Atsar

Etymologically, *Atsar* means a trace or remnant of something, including ruins (al-Hasani, 2001). The word can also mean "a quotation," as in the term *du'a ma'thur* (a prayer

quoted from the Prophet)( Nadlir, 2020).

In terminological usage, jurists (*fuqaha*) often use the word "*atsar*" to refer to the statements of the early scholars (*salaf*), Companions, Successors, and later generations. Terminologically, there are two opinions:

1. *Atsar* is the same as *Hadith*, so all narrations from the Prophet, Companions, or Successors are called *Atsar*.
2. *Atsar* is different from *Hadith*; it is specifically for something attributed to Companions and Successors, whether their sayings or actions (al-Shalih, 1991).

## CONCLUSION

The terms Hadith, Sunnah, Khabar, and Atsar in the treasury of Hadith science demonstrate a semantic complexity that is not merely linguistic but also carries significant methodological implications. Essentially, these four terms refer to the corpus of narrations that serve as a source of Islamic teachings, yet each has different emphases and scopes of meaning according to the scholarly context and perspective of the scholars using them.

On one hand, there is a fundamental similarity where these terms are often used interchangeably in general usage to refer to everything originating from the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). On the other hand, when explored terminologically, each term has its own specificity. Hadith emerges as the most specific and strict term, exclusively referring to all sayings, actions, approvals, or characteristics directly attributed to the Prophet. Sunnah has a broader scope, encompassing not only formally narrated aspects but also continuous practice, character, and the entire life journey of the Prophet. From the perspective of *Usul al-Fiqh*, Sunnah emphasizes its function as a source of Shari'ah law.

Meanwhile, Khabar and Atsar show a more diverse spectrum of meaning. Khabar literally means "news" and, in some scholarly views, has a more general scope than Hadith, as it can include narrations from the Prophet and from others. As for Atsar, it is predominantly used to refer specifically to narrations from Companions and Successors, although in certain usage it can also include Prophetic narrations.

This diversity in meaning is fundamentally influenced by the differing disciplines of the scholars. Hadith scholars tend to define these terms with a more technical and specific approach, while legal theorists emphasize their legal aspects, and jurists understand them within the framework of *taklifi* rulings. This difference is not merely a semantic debate but has practical implications for the methodology of hadith research, the classification of legal sources, and the tracing of a narration's authority.

Thus, a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the conceptual distinctions between Hadith, Sunnah, Khabar, and Atsar is an important prerequisite for depth and accuracy in Islamic studies, particularly in hadith research and Islamic legal derivation. This research underscores that awareness of this terminological complexity will enrich academic analysis and preserve methodological integrity in Islamic studies.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

All praise and gratitude are due to Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala, for all His mercy and blessings, enabling the completion of this scholarly article. The author expresses the deepest appreciation and gratitude to all parties who have provided invaluable support and contribution during the research and writing process of this article entitled "Distinctions Between Hadith, Sunnah, Khabar, and Atsar: A Conceptual Study and Differences in Scholarly Perspectives." The author also fully realizes that this article is far from perfect. Therefore, constructive criticism and suggestions from readers and academics are highly welcomed for future improvement. May the results of this study provide beneficial and positive contributions to the development of Islamic scholarly heritage, especially in the fields of Hadith Science and *Usul al-Fiqh*.

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